

BELMONT HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

Belmont Town Hall

July 18th, 2006

Present: Cynthia Bannon, Judie Feins, Laurie Graham, Rosalind Kabrhel, Cheryl Morrissey, Fran Yuan (Chair)

Absent: Janet Cudmore-Boswell, Bill Rudman, Moez Rawji, Donna Ruvolo, Connie Williams

Guests and Liaisons Present: Kathryn Bonfiglio (BAR), Lt. Peter Hoerr (placeCityBelmont Police Dept.), Hildy Dvorak (Council on Aging)

The Chair called the meeting to order. Laurie Graham volunteered to take minutes.

New and returning members introduced themselves to the committee; liaisons made introductions as well.

No Place for Hate, MAHRC meeting

Fran attended a recent "No Place for Hate" meeting and received certification for the town of Belmont. She has a notebook of information that contains programs other towns have run and other materials. Cynthia reminded members that the library offered to keep a notebook of information available for library patrons. Discussion of where to display the ADL No Place For Hate sign Fran received.

Suggestions: library, schools, town median strips/deltas

Fran reminded members that any BHRC members can attend the monthly Mass Association of Human Rights Commissions which are held once a month, Friday a.m.

Fran will scan in some of the information she received and email to BHRC Members

Meet Belmont – annual event to be held on August 29

Fran will use some of the material she received (see above) for display at meeting.

Judie, Cynthia, and Roz volunteered to be at the table that evening.

Fran will have a sign-up sheet to be used at events to help establish a mailing list for residents interested in BHRC matters.

Logistics for action on complaints.

Discussion of an incident of a religious group not based in placeCityBelmont which is using a local House of Worship for meeting at night and some complaints about noise from neighbors. Lt. Peter Hoerr discussed role HRC might have in mediating any future issues.

Monitoring phone line

Fran has been monitoring line since its inception. Motion was made for members to take turns monitoring phone line from one meeting to the next. Passed unanimously. Judie will monitor until September meeting

Discussion of monitoring process: if resolvable without input from the Commission, the monitor will take care of matter and fill out a complaint form and send to Fran who is keeping a log of calls. If not resolvable and needs to be addressed immediately (prior to next meeting), monitor should alert Fran to call a meeting.

Fran will send complaint form, mission statement and brochure to new Members

Discussion of Commission roles

Vice-Chair: BHRC is looking for one to be voted in at fall meeting; Fran would like the VC to be more involved in the leadership of the Commission. If members are *not* available/interested in being considered for the position, they should let Fran know before next meeting.

Secretary: will still rotate on a monthly basis but will need to get minutes to Fran 2 weeks after meeting date for distribution. Protocol is to send approved minutes to Fran who will then forward to Sandra Curro (BOS office)

Minutes – Review of minutes from June 1. Motion made to approve as amended.

Discussion of Programs: At June meeting, BHRC discussed various programs/topics for 2006-2007: Mental Illness, Gay Rights-Gay/Lesbian/Trans-gendered Youth, Bullying/Teasing/Harassment, Aging/Elder Issues, and Housing. Suggested that some programs could be public meetings (Bullying and Housing), while others would lend themselves to speakers coming to an HRC meeting. Library, Chenery Middle School and Belmont High School would be good venues for larger meetings.

Fran asked members to think about which topics they could help with in the Fall.

Gay Rights – Cynthia has already spoken with PFLAG (Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays) about having a speaker come to the HRC. Initial impression was that the speaker would only be interested in presenting before a larger audience with the possibility of raising donations rather than a discussion of issues/needs with the BHRC; she will contact again.

Housing – Judie will approach someone at Fair Housing to come speak with the BHRC prior to a larger meeting; Rosalind will contact David Harris, head of Greater Boston Fair Housing Association to see if he could come or suggest another speaker.

Bullying – Laurie is already working with Kathryn Bonfiglio (BAR) and Erica Dinerman (Parent Education Series) on bringing in speaker(s) to address this on a town-wide basis

Mental Health – Fran will approach placeMcLean hospital, Laurie will get some contact names of people who have worked with BPS and provide to Fran.

Aging – Hildy will speak with Nava Niv-Vogel of the COA about this and see if Nava might be available to come to an HRC meeting to discuss and will see what larger program might be co-sponsored with the Senior Center. Rosalind said the AG's office had an Elder Abuse Hotline which might be a good resource. Cynthia mentioned a program at Winn Brook, "Blast from the Past", sponsored by the Rotary. Seniors come into the school and share their memories with elementary schools. Kathryn mentioned a video shown at a BAR meeting and will get name to the commission.

Death of BHS Choice student.

Kathryn Bonfiglio discussed death of Herman Taylor, a BHS 2007 graduate, shot in Dorchester on 7/7. She shared a Memory Book his family and friends have made

which will be at his wake. His family has been very grateful for support from the Belmont Community and have set up a memorial fund in his name to provide Youth Camp tuition for youth in Boston.

BAR arranged for grief counselors to come to placeCityBelmont and to the AME church in Roxbury. If still needed during summer and school year, BAR will make arrangements. BAR also looking to extend transportation hours for Choice/METCO students .

Fran brought up issue that this is one area where Belmont kids are different from Boston kids: safety. Speaks to the need for kids to have programs in a safe community. Judie said that it is important for people to be able to afford to move into/live in a safe community.

Meeting adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted – Laurie Graham